Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan

2008 - 2009

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN

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OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

July 29, 2009

The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
129 Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
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Honourable Speaker:

Pursuant to Section 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996,* I have the distinct privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

This Annual report highlights office activities for the period April 1, 2008 through March 31, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

David A. Wilkie
Acting Chief Electoral Officer

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I. Message of the Chief Electoral Officer

It is a distinct honour and pleasure that I publish this Annual Report for the period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

The Chief Electoral Officer, as an independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly, must possess neutrality, integrity, and be worthy of the trust of all the components of the voting public and political entities. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer strives to achieve excellence in its administration and reaches this goal through the optimal use of the resources made available to it. The Chief Electoral Officer's role is to strengthen the Office's mission, uphold its values and enhance its vision, while remaining accountable for its performance. Furthermore, both the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public need adequate information about the Office's goals and they must be able to measure the Office's achievements. The Strategic Initiatives section of this Report is the Office's fourth "Report Card" on how well the Office has progressed and where more resources are required "to get the job done".

The Office spent the fiscal year 2008-2009 completing post-election wrap-up, particularly the audit of the Imprest Account financial records from each constituency Returning Officer, including feedback to Returning Officers; the review of all candidate and registered political party election returns including feedback to candidate's business mangers; the completion of the process of meeting with stakeholders as part of the comprehensive post-election review; and the research and drafting of the new *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume III)*. Volume III added new recommendations as well as including revised and updated recommendations from the previous Annual Reports.

As I look back over the 2008-2009 fiscal year I am particularly proud of:

- the Office's ability "to get the job done" in the face of adversity (an ongoing shortage of staff and the sudden departure of the previous Chief Electoral Officer);
- the positive contacts made through the "Public Forum on Voting and Ways To Improve Accessibility to Voters With Disabilities"; attendance at the "International United Nations Day for Persons with Disabilities"; and the successful resolution of the Human Rights Commission complaint regarding accessibility concerns at a polling place;
- the successful research and writing efforts to draft Volume III with in excess of 110 recommendations for changes to The Election Act, 1996;
- the improved procedures for reviewing the candidate and registered political party election returns; including providing feedback;
- the continuing efforts to improve training by taking the Returning Officer/Election Clerk/Automation Coordinator training to La Ronge for the Cumberland By-Election rather than the usual choice of Regina or Saskatoon;
- joining the Saskatchewan Geospatial Imagery Collaborative; and
- efforts to increase continuing education and make the Office an open, creative and enjoyable place to work.

The ultimate success of the Office may be achieved through additional human and fiscal resources and the Office redoubling its efforts to provide a "service-oriented attitude". Such improvements to the electoral process in Saskatchewan must start with renewed partnerships with all stakeholders including future and new voters, First-Nations and Métis voters, voters who have disabilities, registered political parties, legislators, and the electorate. Improved communications with stakeholders are needed, for example more frequent meetings of the registered political party advisory committee and in-person training seminars for candidates and their business managers about elections finances.

The achievements of the 2008-2009 fiscal year, including the administration of the Cumberland By-Election were made possible by the continued support and dedicated effort of the Cumberland Returning Officer and her election officials, candidates in the Cumberland By-Election, registered political parties and their volunteers, suppliers, contractors, and the dedicated staff of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. I extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to all of these individuals for their professionalism, spirit and commitment to continue to advance the health of electoral democracy in Saskatchewan.

Collectively we can create a made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all our stakeholders!

David A. Wilkie
Acting Chief Electoral Officer
July 2009

II. Executive Summary

From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 the Office, in addition to annual operational activities, undertook preparations to develop and implement strategic initiatives, which were outlined in the Strategic Plan 2005-2011, and expanded upon in the last four annual reports.

This Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer outlines and discusses strategic initiatives and Office activities over a 12-month period including the administration of the Cumberland By-Election.

The first section details the Mission Statement, Mandate, Values and Responsibilities of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. It is followed by a major section on Strategic Initiatives, which is in effect a "Report Card" on the Initiatives of the Office. Details on the progress of all short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategic initiatives are updated by indicating either:

- "Completed" if an initiative is fully completed; or
- detailed "Accomplishments" and/or "Updates" for those initiatives still in progress; and
- one short-term initiative and three medium-term initiatives remain totally uncompleted. They are as follows: implementing an elections finance reporting system (short-term); implementing the elections finance reporting system (medium-term); implementing the automation of electoral geography products (medium-term) and preparing a plan to implement a Permanent Register of Electors (medium-term).

A section on annual Elections Saskatchewan activities outlines annual activities with respect to constituency returning officers, registered political parties including registration, potential candidates, annual financing reporting, the political contributions tax credit system, annual/campaign period reporting, annual reporting of the Office including *Detail of Expenditures*, statutory compliance assistance and public disclosure/public relations.

The section on Operational Expenditures outlines expenditures of the central elections administration as well as the decentralized expenditures of the constituency returning officer. The 2008-2009 Financial Statement of Elections Saskatchewan, and notes, are also included as an Appendix.

The section on the Cumberland By-Election gives a quick snap-shot about the June 25, 2008 By-Election.

The Liaison section outlines Office liaison activities with respect to:

- various stakeholder groups in order to receive feedback on election matters;
- the education of various stakeholder groups about Elections Saskatchewan;
- the review and assessment of new electoral administration initiatives: and
- maintaining a liaison with all independent officers of the Legislative Assembly.

The Miscellaneous Activities section includes an update on human rights complaints, staffing in the Office, as well as a new category of continuing education.

The Report concludes with:

- a note on the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III – Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* – Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume III) which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 30, 2009; and
- one additional recommendation for a change to *The Election Act, 1996,* regarding the formalization of the tabling of the *Detail of Expenditures* report.

III. Mission Statement, Mandate, Values, Vision and Responsibilities of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

A. Mission Statement

To ensure the right of the people of Saskatchewan to participate freely in honest, open and fair electoral events, and to encourage the involvement of political parties, candidates and electors by raising their awareness and understanding of electoral processes that are transparent, efficient and accessible.

B. Mandate

The Office is a non-partisan body charged with the mandate of directing and supervising the administrative and financial conduct of provincial electoral events. The Chief Electoral Officer, appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly, directs the Office and its activities. Under *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office is responsible for the administration of Provincial General Elections, By-Elections, enumerations (other than during a writ of election) and provincial elections finances. The Office is additionally charged with the administration of the Province's political contributions tax credit disclosure system under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office periodically administers and oversees referenda and plebiscites under *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and time votes under *The Time Act*. The Office's mandate is supported by the contributions of administrative and professional personnel as detailed in the organizational chart at the end of this section.

C. Values

Elections Saskatchewan's values are:

- To be independent and non-partisan ensuring public confidence in the independence of the Office and its activities by treating all stakeholders equally and without preference;
- To have integrity making certain that every decision and every action enhances the democratic rights of all electors by interpreting and applying policy and legislation fairly and consistently;
- To be open and transparent in all activities through consistency of action, regular and public reporting, broad communications and information sharing between and during electoral events;
- To be accountable to electors and the members of the Legislative Assembly through statutory reporting of activity and performance against published standards and open discussion of the legislative and regulatory framework for electoral events and election finances;
- To be efficient in designing processes and ensuring financial accountability through the development, management and deployment of up-to-date and cost-effective technology, processes, access channels and tools that encourage maximum participation and facilitate maximum compliance with financial reporting obligations;
- To be effective in electoral event delivery procedures and operations reducing barriers to compliance, participation and access to the process for electors, candidates and parties, ensuring that workers are well prepared, processes are well designed and measurement systems are in place;
- To be innovative, creative and flexible in delivering the present and preparing for the future looking broadly for opportunities and partnerships while considering electoral process needs and adopting optimal solutions;

- To be consultative with all our stakeholders using advisory committees to evaluate legislative, regulatory and operational frameworks to ensure that they are current and relevant, regularly reviewing all stakeholder perspectives and needs, and by sharing evaluations of Elections Saskatchewan's performance;
- To be professional in all our activities by bringing to Saskatchewan the best practices of electoral administrators across Canada and in democracies across the world; and
- To create a cooperative working environment and encourage all members of the election team to work together and to work with their stakeholders and partners to better serve the electorate of Saskatchewan.

D. Vision

Elections Saskatchewan's vision is:

A made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all of our stakeholders.

There are eight aspects to our vision:

- Broadly-based communications initiatives, publications and advertising, combined with focused outreach programs will ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of their opportunities to be involved in the electoral process;
- Administrative and physical barriers that challenge or deter electors will be identified, removed and replaced by inclusive and accessible processes and procedures that will encourage the highest level of participation in Saskatchewan electoral events;
- Electors will have the opportunity to use proven and leading-edge technologies to obtain electoral information and participate in all aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration and casting their ballot;
- Cost effective electoral processes will take advantage of state-of-the-art information and technical systems that capitalize on public investment in government databases and related activities and also benefit from public and private sector partnerships within Saskatchewan and across Canada;
- Increased compliance with the election finances provisions of the legislation will be achieved through the direct involvement of political parties, candidates, official agents and business managers in the development of a full range of simplified assistance tools to be provided by Elections Saskatchewan, resulting in reduced investigation and enforcement activity;
- The wishes and needs of all stakeholders in the electoral process will be canvassed and considered through formalized and timely outreach and consultative processes with provisions for meaningful review and feedback;
- Through timely reviews of electoral processes and legislation by Saskatchewan's legislators and the Chief Electoral Officer, necessary innovation and flexibility in the statutory and operational framework will be achieved while preserving the integrity of the system; and
- A pool of well-trained election officers will be available to ensure that Elections Saskatchewan can meet its event-readiness mandate.

E. Responsibilities

The Chief Electoral Officer's primary responsibility is to maintain a state of provincial election readiness. To that end, the Office must appoint and train requisite numbers of constituency returning officers and election officials to ensure electoral preparedness throughout the government's mandate.

The Election Act, 1996 places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to ensure compliance with financial transparency and disclosure requirements of *The Election Act, 1996*. In fulfillment of this duty, the Office publishes guidance documentation to assist chief official agents and business managers in discharging their administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, in compiling requisite support documentation, and in undertaking annual financial disclosure in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office also conducts electoral educational workshops throughout the Province to ensure effective execution of election activities.

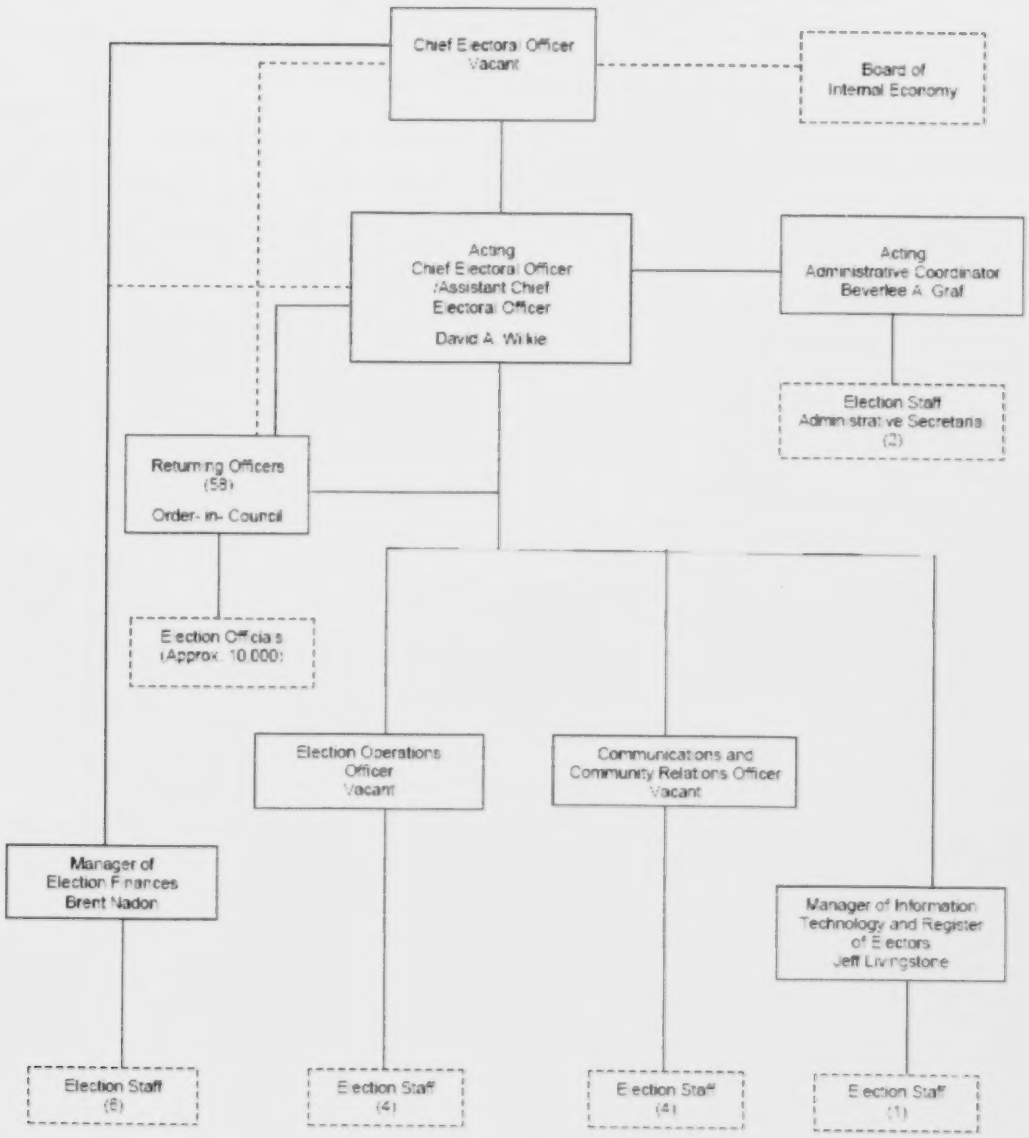
The Office is responsible for assessing and reimbursing, where applicable, election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the examination and audit of registered political parties' and candidates' expense returns and requisite disclosure documentation. To promote transparency, expense return details are published and tabled in the Legislative Assembly for public review.

The Office is responsible for investigating suspected or alleged contraventions of *The Election Act, 1996*, as the Chief Electoral Officer considers necessary. The Office, in determining if an offence has been committed, considers whether the overall purposes, policy rationales and/or legislative intentions of *The Election Act, 1996* were violated in the circumstances at issue. Where the Chief Electoral Officer determines that the alleged contravention is supported on the investigative evidence, the Office forwards the matter to the Ministry of Justice for prosecutorial review.

The Chief Electoral Officer reports annually to the Board of Internal Economy on budgetary matters and to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on matters related to *The Election Act, 1996*. In addition to such annual reporting, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares and tables reports in the Legislative Assembly on all electoral specific activities. Provincial election results are published in the *Statement of Votes - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume I)* and its complementary volume the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer Campaign Contributions and Expenditures - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume II)*. For the first time, a second complementary volume, the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer – Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume III)* was published and tabled April 30, 2009. Administrative and financial reporting of constituency by-elections is encapsulated in individual by-election reports.

The Office maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

Elections Saskatchewan Organizational Chart (November 1, 2008)



IV. Planning Overview

In January 2005 the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer embarked on a strategic planning exercise. The results of this planning process were as follows:

- **Three time frames** were set for activities:
  - Short-Term Activities to be completed by **April 1, 2006**
  - Medium-Term Activities to be completed by **April 1, 2007**
  - Long-Term Activities to be completed by **April 1, 2011.**
- Elections Saskatchewan's Mission, Values and Vision were agreed upon during the planning overview process. See previous section of report for details.

As in the 2007-2008 Annual Report, this year's Annual Report includes a measure of the Office's performance and will show whether or not the Office is meeting its objectives.

Details on the progress of all short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategic initiatives are updated by indicating either:

- "Completed" if an initiative is fully completed; or
- detailed "Accomplishments" and/or "Updates" for those initiatives still in progress.

One short-term initiative and three medium-term initiatives remain totally uncompleted.

A	B	C	D
Type of Initiative	**Specific Initiative**	**Reason Not Completed**	**Possible Ways Forward**
Short-Term	Implement an Elections Finance Reporting System	Illness/subsequent death of consultant.	Pending organizational review regarding lack of staff + sufficient resources in subsequent budgets.
Medium-Term	Implement the Elections Finance Reporting System	Budget reductions by Board of Internal Economy in 2006-2007 & 2007-2008 fiscal years and Office did not request funds for project in 2008-2009 due to lack of staff.	
Medium Term	Implement the Automation of Electoral Geography Products	Due to lack of resources (staff + budget).	Pending organizational review regarding lack of staff + sufficient resources in subsequent budgets.
Medium Term	Prepare a Plan to Implement a Permanent Electronic Register of Electors	Permanent Register not implemented due to no Regulations being developed and approved by Government & lack of staff in Office to draft until done in "Volume III" – April 30, 2009.	Passing proposed recommendations for changes to *The Election Act, 1996* +/or Regulations which were tabled April 30/09 + pending organizational review regarding lack of staff.
As per the original strategic plan, Short –Term initiatives were due to be completed April 1, 2006 and Medium Term Initiatives were to be completed April 1, 2007. If these initiatives are to be completed in time for the November 7, 2011 Provincial General Election the "possible ways forward" identified in Column D must come to pass by spring 2010.			

V. Strategic Initiatives

A. Short -Term (by April 1, 2006) [with updates]

1. Develop and Implement a Change Management Strategy

Completed

2. Conduct a Strategic Impact Analysis of Bill 199, an Act to Amend *The Election Act, 1996*

Completed

3. Develop a Stakeholder Outreach/Communications Strategy

Completed

4. Conduct a Strategic Analysis into the Automation of Electoral Geography Products

Objectives:

Currently all of the electoral maps, street guides and poll keys are generated manually. The cartographers required to manually prepare these products are becoming a scarce resource and may not be available to meet future requirements. Elections Saskatchewan must determine the strategic alternatives and an implementation plan to resolving this issue as soon as possible in order to meet the target date of election readiness for April 1, 2007. Consideration should be given to conducting a pilot project of the solution(s) selected, preferably in high-growth constituencies, as a "proof of concept". The map products currently available will allow Elections Saskatchewan to meet any requirements for electoral events in the meantime.

Accomplishments:

- An electoral geography impact analysis study was completed in October 2005. In November 2005, the manager of election operations and communications and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer took part in an electoral technology accord workshop on electoral geography in Ottawa;
- After the Weyburn-Big Muddy By-Election:
  - further follow-up with information services corporation will take place; and
  - preparations will begin for approximately 18 returning officers to begin in September to review their polling division maps where some polls have experienced large population growth.
  - for staffing and financial reasons it was decided not to do a complete remapping of all 58 constituencies. Instead constituencies with the most residential growth since the last election were identified.

Update: See medium-term initiatives #7.

5. Conduct a Strategic Analysis into the Impacts of Implementing a Permanent Electronic Voters' List

Objectives:

The second reading of Bill 119 contained an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voters' list.

Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voters' list."

This directive indicates that it would be prudent of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to commission an immediate study into the strategic impacts and options of developing a permanent electronic voters' list for Saskatchewan.

This study would have been recommended irrespective of Bill 119 being introduced because it is a key element that must be reviewed as part of the Chief Electoral Officer's efforts to modernize and renew electoral processes in the province of Saskatchewan. The introduction, or studies in regards to the impacts of implementing, automated registers of electors has been a major activity for most other electoral jurisdictions in Canada over the past ten years. Because of these activities, there is a wealth of information and experiences for Elections Saskatchewan to draw from in the conduct of this important study.

Accomplishments:

- Elections Saskatchewan received three generous offers for the intellectual property of list of electors software (from Elections Ontario, Elections British Columbia and Elections Alberta);
- A consultant was hired to survey the three systems and to make a recommendation regarding which system best fit Saskatchewan's needs;
- After an extensive field application survey (November 2005); the consultant recommended Election Alberta's web-based Alberta Register of Electors System (AROES);
- The Office has engaged the services of a systems consulting firm to make the necessary adjustments to AROES to make it the Saskatchewan specific Elections Saskatchewan Permanent Register of Eligible Electors (ESPREE); and
  - the firm that the Office has engaged is the original firm that developed AROES and has customized the software for Elections Northwest Territories and Elections Nunavut;
  - the software changes related to the list of electors are expected to be operative in the fall of 2006; and
  - other components are anticipated for a completion date in early 2007;
- The Office anticipates the enactment of regulations that will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to immediately commence the process of ensuring that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voters' list that will facilitate voting and communications in an election in a more modern and efficient manner.

Update: See medium-term initiatives #3 and #9.

6. **Conduct a Strategic Study to Implement a Contact Centre**

Completed

7. **Conduct an Organizational Review**

Objectives:

The current centralized and decentralized organizational structures and functions should be reviewed. This should be done after the other short-term strategic initiatives outlined above are

completed because the outcomes of those studies could have major impacts on the functionality and structure of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Accomplishments:

- In the Fiscal year 2005-2006 a brief organizational review took place. It was decided that it was not the time to make any major changes to the current organizational structure at least until after the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election.

Update: In January 2009 the Board of Internal Economy engaged the services of Mr. David Hamilton, the former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and Chief Electoral Officer of the Northwest Territories to do an organizational review of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The review was completed in March 2009 and submitted to the Board of Internal Economy for consideration. At the time of writing this report, the organizational review awaits the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer at which time the review will be shared with the Chief Electoral Officer for consideration.

8. **Conduct a Review of Current Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines**

   Completed

9. **Implement an Elections Finance Reporting System**

   Objectives:

   Election expense reporting by political parties and candidates is a statutory requirement with specific time deadlines post election. Currently this is a manual paper-oriented process that is onerous for both those completing the documents and for Elections Saskatchewan to review. Automated tools should be developed that can be distributed to the business managers for candidates and the chief official agents for political parties. This would clarify the rules for reporting and simplify the preparation of these reports and facilitate the activity for everyone involved. This would also reduce the workload and time frames required for Elections Saskatchewan staff to review the reports (currently five to seven months elapsed time) and should lead to more timely reimbursement of elections expenses.

   Accomplishments:

   - A consultant has begun to assess Elections Canada's elections finance reporting system with the hope of developing a similar software program; **[due to the consultant's illness and subsequent death this initial assessment was not completed].**

   Update: See medium-term initiatives #4.

10. **Review and Update the Election Readiness Plan**

    Completed

11. **Develop a Policy Framework**

    Completed

B. Medium-Term Initiatives (by April 1, 2007) [with updates]

1. Implement the Recommendation from the Organizational Review

Objectives:

This activity must be completed early in the 2006-2007 fiscal year in order to be election ready (organizationally). This may require additional staffing and training and will have an impact on the Election Readiness Plan.

Accomplishments:

As noted in short-term initiative #7, it was decided that Fiscal year 2005-2006 was not the time to make any major changes to the current organizational structure at least until after the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election.

Update: See Short-term initiative #7.

2. Continue to Implement the Change Management Strategy

Completed

3. Develop an Information Technology Strategy

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan's headquarters technology requirements are likely to be impacted by the studies conducted in the short-term in regards to implementing a permanent electronic voters' list, implementing a contact centre, implementing an election finance reporting system and potentially by some of the outreach strategies selected. It is important to consider the development of an Information Technology Strategy once these other studies are completed.

Accomplishments:

This study would result in a blueprint for:

- the implementation of computerized business solutions (the applications architecture);
- the establishment of software standards (the software architecture);
- the installation of a standardized computer hardware infrastructure;
- the implementation of a telecommunication network (voice and data); and
- using the internet (enabling technology, not content).

Elections Saskatchewan Permanent Register of Eligible Electors (ESPREE)

- In the Spring of 2006 the Office engaged the services of a systems consulting firm to make the necessary adjustments to Election Alberta's web-based AROES Software to make it the Saskatchewan specific ESPREE Software. The firm that the Office has engaged is the original firm that developed AROES and has customized the software for Elections Northwest Territories and Elections Nunavut. The software changes related to the list of electors were operative by December 2006 (Phase I – Release 1). After the Martensville By-Election some adjustments were done to take into account suggestions from the automation coordinator and data entry operators and to expand its use to a general election (Phase I – Release 2).

- Phase II was completed with further updates for the Voters' List and an Elections Module (polls, polling places, candidates and ballots), but not sufficiently tested to use in the general election. Phase II of ESPREE was used in the Cumberland By-Election.

4. Implement the Elections Finance Reporting System

Objectives:

The system developed should be introduced to the stakeholders involved in some form of a focus group to get feedback and reactions to the new application, (i.e. consultation, before a formal roll-out and training exercise is scheduled). This will be critical to the successful implementation of this system.

A comprehensive familiarization and training plan should be established as a part of the roll-out strategy for this critically important system.

If a by-election occurs, it would be a valuable learning experience prior to using this system for the first time in a general election. Since these are beyond the purview of Elections Saskatchewan, it may be worth considering a By-Election simulation activity, if no other opportunities arise.

Accomplishments:

Due to budget reductions this project was shelved for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 fiscal years. In 2008-2009 this project was on hold as the Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) failed to approve its funding for the fiscal year.

Update: The Office did not request any money through the budget process in February 2009 for fiscal 2009-2010 due to lack of staff in the Office.

5. Implement the Contact Centre Strategy

Completed

6. Implementation of Outreach Strategies

Completed

7. Implement the Automation of Electoral Geography Product Strategies

Objectives:

The activity is dependant on the study being conducted in the short-term. The implementation plan will be based on the recommendations from the earlier strategic initiative and must be completed and in place prior to the next anticipated general election. The electoral map products required are critical to the conduct of an election for Election Saskatchewan elections workers, the political parties and candidates for campaign purposes and for the general public to know the electoral boundaries and what constituency they are eligible to vote in.

Accomplishments:

- For staffing and financial reasons it was decided not to do a complete remapping of all 58 constituencies. Revised maps were produced for those constituencies where the most residential growth has occurred since the last election.

- In total seven constituencies were remapped in 2007 for the Twenty–Sixth Provincial General Election: Martensville, Regina Dewdney, Regina Northeast, Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, Regina Wascana Plains, Saskatoon Silver Springs and Saskatoon Southeast. The Lloydminster Constituency was remapped in 2004 for use in the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election. All of these maps were done in the traditional manner.

Much more work will need to be done on the automation of electoral geography products. This work is also directly connected to the establishment of a permanent list of electors. If the decision to establish a permanent list of electors is confirmed through additional changes to *The Elections Act, 1996* or new regulations, then more resources will be required to automate electoral geography products.

Due to population changes across the province a full review of the polling division (internal) boundaries is required prior to the November 7, 2011 general election. While these maps could continue to be done the "old-fashioned way", it is advisable to move towards digital mapping.

Also in the longer term, as it gets closer to the year 2012, it would also be advisable to move to digital mapping to assist the constituency boundaries commission 2012 when it begins its deliberations to review and change the constituency (external) boundaries.

Also see medium-term initiative #9.

Accomplishments:

In February 2009, the Office was asked for access to electronic copies of the provincial constituency maps. As a result of providing access to the provincial constituency maps the Office was invited to join the new Saskatchewan Geospatial Imagery Collaborative in February, 2009.

The Saskatchewan Geospatial Imagery Collaborative (SGIC) is a partnershi0p of organizations sharing knowledge and costs relating to acquisition and use of remotely sensed imagery for mutual and public benefit. The collaborative operates servers providing a web mapping client and an OGC-standard Web Map Service (WMS) for sharing geospatial imagery. Members of the public are welcome to use a limited set of the SGIC's geospatial imagery holdings, while SGIC members gain access to an expanded set of imagery products. It is hoped that participation in this collaborative will assist the Office to move forward with improvements to constituency maps. Access to the collaborative's website has already enabled Office staff to quickly electronically check for the proper constituency when given the section, township, range co-ordinates rather than the past practice of checking for constituencies manually with paper maps.

Update: Minimal movement took place on this initiative in the 2008-2009 fiscal year due to the lack of staff in the Office.

At time of writing of this Report, further movement on this initiative awaits the results of the Organizational Review of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and possible Legislative change relating to the implementation of a Permanent Register of Electors.

8. **Implement Changes from Bill 119**

Completed

9. **Prepare a Plan to Implement a Permanent Electronic Register of Electors**

Objectives:

This initiative is dependant on the results of the impact analysis study and regulations that will be developed after Bill 119 is enacted.

The focus of this initiative will be on ensuring that the Chief Electoral Officer is positioned to meet the objectives outlined when Bill 119 was introduced. At the second reading of Bill 119 there was an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voters' list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voter's list."

Without pre-supposing the content of the set of regulations developed or the results of the impact analysis and recommendations, this initiative will be a major undertaking for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Currently there are no processes, procedures, guidelines or technological tools in place to meet this requirement.

In addition, this initiative is directly linked to the automation of electoral geography products initiative. The key to a successful electronic register of voters is knowing where the eligible electors live, i.e. a physical address, so that they can be directed to vote in the proper constituency and the correct polling division within that constituency. Since people move and addresses do not, it is critical to have an automated geography system with all addresses pinpointed within the electoral boundaries. This becomes more complex in rural settings where physical addresses are more difficult to determine and automate.

Another critical success or risk factor that must be considered is timing. With less than two years to the next anticipated provincial general election, it may be prudent to focus on implementing a phased approach to developing a permanent electronic voters' list for Saskatchewan.

Other Canadian electoral jurisdictions have followed an approach of developing the tools, processes and procedures to collect the voter information from a final enumeration (either prior to or during an electoral event) as a basis for the implementation of a permanent register of voters. In these situations the development of complex technology tools (integrated with electoral geography computer systems) and the implementation of reliable data sources to maintain the registers were conducted outside the pressures of getting ready for and conducting an electoral event.

All of the above must be seriously considered by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the conduct of this important initiative.

Accomplishments:

- There has been some progress with the establishment of the ESPREE Software Program for an Electronic Voters' List (see medium-term initiatives # 3 earlier in this document).
- There have not been any Regulations forwarded by the Government to the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer since the introduction of Bill 119. As a result certain aspects of a move towards a Permanent List of Electors are at a standstill and will have to be carried out at some future date. An electronic Voters' List is now possible with the advent of the ESPREE software, however, because there are no Regulations it will not be a Permanent List of Electors. Regulations are needed to set down how the process of updating the List of Electors (from various data-sources) will be carried out between the enumeration, and the subsequent call of the next Provincial General Election.
- As mentioned in the objective section, to move towards a permanent register of electors other jurisdictions have had a "final full enumeration" prior to the implementation of a permanent list of electors. Given that the Province of Saskatchewan now has a fixed date election, an enumeration outside of the writ period could be set for September 2011, ensuring that the information is not "stale" (over six months old) and to ensure the best possible base for a permanent list of electors to go forward.

Update: Recommendations regarding the Implementation of a Permanent List of Electors are included in pages 22 - 30 and pages 74 – 78 of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer Volume III Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election November 7, 2007 which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 30, 2009. At time of writing this report, The Office awaits the consideration of the Report by the Legislative Assembly.

10. Develop Strategies to Measure Stakeholder Satisfaction

Objectives:

Strategies should be developed to measure stakeholder satisfaction before, during and after the next election. These strategies will be related to a large degree by the outreach campaigns conducted by Elections Saskatchewan. All stakeholders should be consulted in some meaningful manner. This will provide measurements and benchmarks to assess the results of the new strategies and activities implemented that can be used to make corrections to current practices, introduce new practices and continue the change management culture of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Accomplishments:

- No accomplishments to date: a budget item of $33,000 (2007-2008) and $30,000 (2008-2009) for strategies to measure stakeholder satisfaction did not receive approval by the Board of Internal Economy from the Office's 2007-2008 budget nor its 2008-2009 budget. This included the cost of a public opinion survey of MLA's, the public and Registered Political Parties. As a result the objectives for this initiative will be deferred further into the long-term initiatives.

Update: This initiative will be reviewed leading up to the 2011 Provincial General Election.

C. Long-Term Initiatives (by April 1, 2011)

1. Become a Leader for Electoral Reform in Saskatchewan

Objectives:

The baseline for a renewed electoral system for the Province of Saskatchewan will be established through the completion of the strategic initiatives outlined in the short and medium terms of this strategy.

In the longer term, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will become a leader for electoral reform in the province. Through the inventive introduction of electoral administration "best practices" and the innovative use of technology, in particular the permanent electronic Voters' List, Elections Saskatchewan will establish credentials as a leader in the "elections business". This credibility will enable the Chief Electoral Officer to take the next step of building collaborative relationships with other government agencies and electoral jurisdictions across the province and the country. This, in turn, will create opportunities for the negotiation of sharing agreements across the province with municipalities and school boards and potentially other partners in electoral jurisdictions in the rest of Canada.

These groundbreaking partnerships and joint ventures will provide an opportunity to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of conducting electoral processes in Saskatchewan. There is a strong potential to contain the overall costs of conducting elections (there is only one taxpayer!); make the electoral process more transparent to the electorate and other stakeholders; improve the awareness of the electorate of their democratic rights; and, possibly assist in reversing the trend of lower voter turnout.

Accomplishments:

- **One of the values of the Office is to be innovative, creative and flexible. In other words the Office is constantly looking for ways to improve our service to stakeholders.**
- **The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act, 1996 - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election November 7, 2007 (Volume III) which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 30, 2009 is in part the result of a comprehensive post election review (see long-term initiatives – objective #3 for more details).**
- **The publishing of Volume III is the first step forward on this initiative.**

Update: The Office awaits the consideration of the Report by the Legislative Assembly. At the time of writing the Office hopes to begin the process of reviewing the results of the comprehensive post-election review for possible improvements to Office Policies and Procedures in the Fall of 2009.

2. Continue to Implement Change Management Concepts

Objectives:

The change management concepts initiated in the short and medium terms will be expanded as the culture becomes more deeply embedded in the organization.

The mission, values and vision developed in this strategic plan will be revisited and updated to accommodate the evolving environment of electoral management as required.

The professional development of staff will be more fully addressed and become a key focus in the longer-term.

Accomplishments:

See long-term initiatives – objective #3.

3. **Conduct a Comprehensive Post Election Review**

Objectives:

A comprehensive post election review must be conducted. All of the stakeholder measurements and benchmarks conducted before during and after the election need to be reviewed and evaluated. It is critical to know and understand what worked, what did not and why. Further stakeholder consultations will be required as well.

This analysis will be a key ingredient in the preparation of the post election report to the Legislature and will ensure that legislative, policy, procedures, guidelines, operational processes, and other issues are identified and dealt with. This activity is critical to improving the electoral process and the establishment of new goals and objectives for the organization. It is equally important that all stakeholders are aware that this will take place, that they are included in the process and that they are privy to the results of this review.

Accomplishments:

- Since January 2008, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has been holding a series of debriefings with important stakeholders. Returning officers and elections clerks were invited to attend the first ever one day debriefing held in either Saskatoon or Regina. Many excellent suggestions for possible changes to office policies and procedures and legislation were discussed. This in-person debriefing was in addition to a written debriefing requested of Returning Officers' also for the first time.

- Debriefings were also held with field liaison officers, automation coordinators, the staff of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, major suppliers such as: Canada Post, our advertising agency, main printer, Sasktel, the Contact Centre, health region staff, groups and individuals representing voters with disabilities, and representatives of the Registered Political Parties. All of the debriefings have been very useful in getting feedback and will go a long way in helping the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to produce Volume III of the Chief Electoral Officer's report on the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election which will focus on recommendations for changes to *The Election Act, 1996*.

Accomplishments continued:

- **The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election November 7, 2007 (Volume III) was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 30, 2009, in part the result of the comprehensive post election review.**

Update: The changes to policies, procedures, guidelines, operational processes and other issues identified from the debriefings scheduled to be done in the 2008-2009 fiscal year were not implemented due to lack of staff in the Office. At the time of writing the Office hopes to begin the process of reviewing the results of the comprehensive post-election review for possible improvements to office policies and procedures in the Fall of 2009, with a completion date of early 2010.

4. **Implement a Permanent Electronic Register of Electors**

Objectives:

This initiative is dependant on the results of the impact analysis study and the subsequent approval of the Legislature. The basis for this activity will be the implementation plan developed as a strategic initiative in the medium-term.

This project is directly linked to the automation of electoral geography products initiative that was identified in the short and medium term activities. The key to a successful Register of Voters is knowing where the eligible electors live i.e. a physical address, so that they can be directed to vote in the proper constituency and the correct polling division within that constituency. Since people move and their addresses do not, it is critical to have an automated geography system with all addresses pinpointed within the electoral boundaries. This situation becomes more complex in rural settings where physical addresses are more difficult to determine and automate.

Accomplishments:

No accomplishments to date: pending regulations and additional resources are required to move towards a Permanent Electronic Register of Electors and automated electoral geography. It is also advisable to invest in electoral geography software soon in order to:

- Improve the quality of electoral maps when the polling division boundaries inside all 58 constituencies are reviewed due to population shifts across the province. The external constituency boundaries will be reviewed by the boundaries commission in 2012. Electoral geography software will be required for that purpose.
- Improve the quality of service provided by this office to the 2012 electoral boundaries commission.

Update: No Regulations were received by the Office in this fiscal year regarding provisions needed to move towards a Permanent Register of Electors. As a resul,t the Office drafted recommendations regarding the Implementation of a Permanent List of Electors. The recommendations are included in pages 22 - 30 and pages 74 – 78 of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election November 7, 2007, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 30, 2009. At time of writing this report, the Office awaits the consideration of the Report by the Legislative Assembly.

In February 2009, the Board of Internal Economy recommended that the 25% (15/58) of constituencies which were to begin re-mapping process in April 2009 be delayed to begin in April 2010. The result is all 58 constituencies are to be re-mapped between April 1, 2010 and April 1, 2011. The ability to complete this task is also contingent on the pending Organizational Review of the Office referred to in short-term initiative #7.

5. **Develop and Implement a New Cadre of Outreach Initiatives**

Objectives:

The results of the outreach initiatives developed in the short and medium terms should be reviewed as a first step in the development of a new outreach strategy.

The new outreach strategy should have a minimum four-year window leading to the next anticipated general provincial election. It should also recognize and take the advantage of opportunities to test the event-related initiatives identified in by-elections that may occur over this time period.

The strategy should examine the opportunities to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and other agencies or organizations to develop and implement education programs to raise the awareness of all sectors of the electorate in regards to the electoral process and their democratic rights and privileges. Again, there will be a strong emphasis on targeting the youth (eighteen to twenty-four year olds) and First Nations sectors of the population. Other target sectors should be identified and addressed as well.

The innovative use of the internet as an information conduit should be studied to take advantage of the high penetration of usage by all sectors of the populace and in particular as the education system makes more extensive use as an educational support tool.

Accomplishments:

Although some significant improvements were made in communications with youth and First Nations/Métis voters for the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election, however, more efforts need to occur. The Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) denied $5,000 to continue outreach with Aboriginal and youth voters for the fiscal year 2008-2009.

Update: The lack of staff in the Office put this initiative on hold for the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year. At time of writing:

- **some new advertising initiatives are being planned for the pending By-Elections in Regina Douglas Park and Saskatoon Riversdale; and**
- **a Communications Consultant has been hired on a six-month contract basis. The process of developing and implementing a new cadre of outreach initiatives has started once again.**

6. **Implement the Information Technology Strategy**

Objectives:

One of the medium-term strategic initiatives identified was the development of an Information Technology Strategy. The recommendations from that study should be reviewed, updated and implemented to meet Elections Saskatchewan's operational requirements.

This implementation will need to include requirements identified from the studies on automating electoral geography and implementing a permanent electronic voters' list.

Accomplishments:

- See medium-term initiative #3 for implementation of an electronic Voters' List.
- No other accomplishments yet, pending automated electoral geography and a Permanent List of Electors.
- For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, The Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) denied $85,000 for capital acquisition to continue to upgrade module one (ESPREE) based on feedback from a debriefing of automation co-ordinators from the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election. Work on the election results and election finance models are also delayed.
- Due to the long lead time for software development and the best practice of testing out new software during a by-election there is a limited window for this development.

Update: At time of writing, the changes to the Enumeration Module of ESPREE based the recommendations of Returning Officers and Automation Coordinators have been completed and will be used for the pending By-Elections in Regina Douglas Park and Saskatoon Riversdale. Also at the time of writing, the Election Results module is nearing completion and may also be used for these pending By-Elections. Also see long-term initiative #4 regarding the implementation of a Permanent Register of Electors.

VI. Annual Elections Saskatchewan Activities

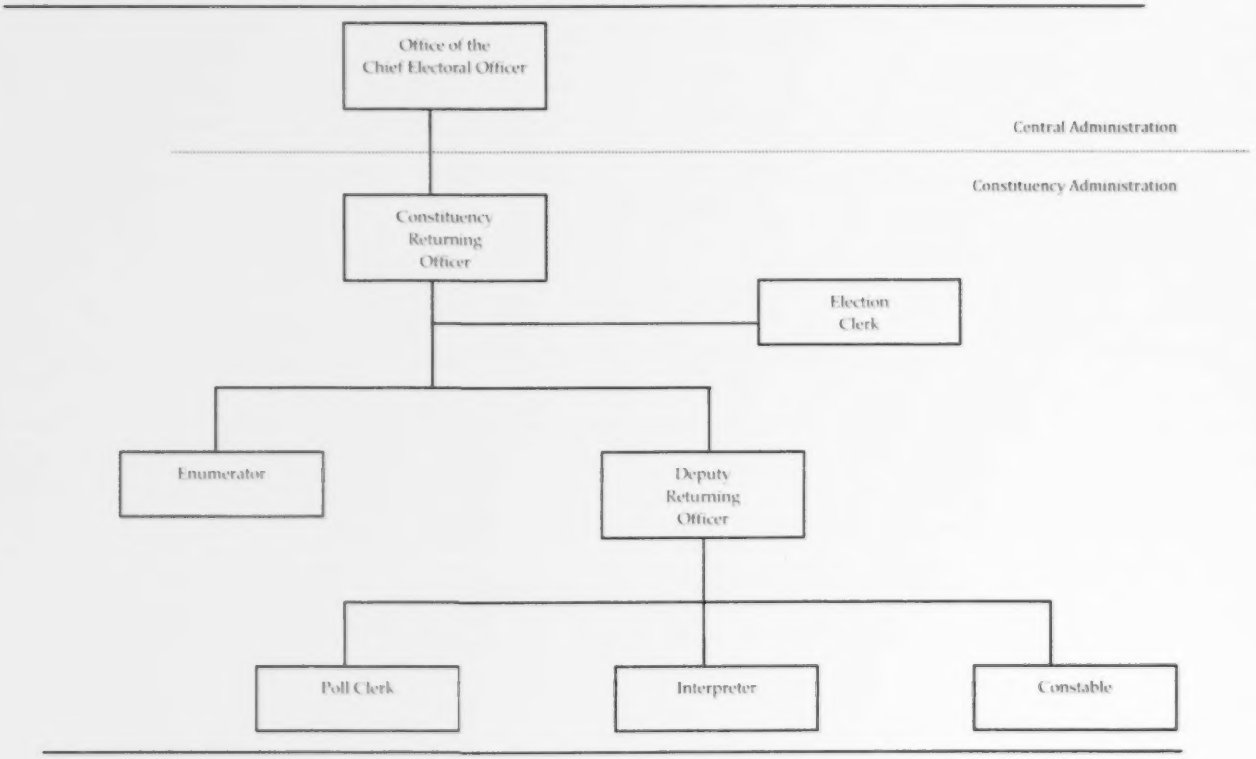
The mandate of the Office is defined by the unique and complex character of Saskatchewan's polity, including the inherent uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of electoral administration, and the multi-layered interaction among registered political parties, candidates and the electorate.

This section outlines specific Office activities undertaken to maintain a state of provincial election readiness.

A. Constituency Returning Officers

Central electoral administration is the responsibility of the Office, with regional operational conduct of electoral events being the responsibility of constituency returning officers. As representatives of the Office, constituency returning officers are entrusted with advancing the neutrality of the Province's decentralized electoral process by administering and reporting on electoral proceedings (general or by-elections, referenda and plebiscites). The decentralized nature of Elections Saskatchewan's electoral administration is depicted in the schematic below.

Decentralized Electoral Administration – Elections Saskatchewan.



An important part of maintaining election readiness is having constituency returning officer appointments for the Province's fifty-eight constituencies.

Constituency Returning Officer Vacancies

Seven Returning Officers have resigned since the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election.

During the 2008 - 2009 Fiscal year there were no new Returning Officers appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Note: The vacancies in the constituencies of Regina Douglas Park, Regina Northeast and Saskatoon Riversdale were filled by direct appointment by the Acting Chief Electoral Officer in June 2009 due to speculation about possible by-elections and the subsequent announcements of the pending resignation of two Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Returning Officer positions in the constituencies of Moose Jaw Wakamow, Prince Albert Carlton, Prince Albert Northcote and Saskatoon Eastview remain vacant. It is anticipated that the recruitment for these vacancies and for any others which may become vacant will begin in early 2010.

B. Registered Political Parties

1. Registration

Under Section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996*, a political party may apply for registration any time between the days fixed for the return to a writ of general election and the fifth day after the issuance of a writ of election. A registration application must be in prescribed form and be accompanied by a complete and accurate petition for registration. Each petition must be executed by no fewer than 2,500 eligible provincial voters, 1,000 of whom must reside in at least ten provincial constituencies, with a minimum of 100 voters in each of those respective constituencies. Concurrent with its application and petition, a political party must file a written statement declaring that its primary purpose is to field candidates for election as Members of the Legislative Assembly. An audited financial statement must also be filed along with prescribed information in respect of the party's leader, senior officers, chief official agent and auditor.

Once the Office has reviewed all requisite registration documentation and vetted the application, the Chief Electoral Officer will register the political party and, in accordance with Section 233 of *The Election Act, 1996*, publish its name in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*. A political party, once registered, is entitled to incur expenses, solicit and receive contribution, participate in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, and field candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly. Registered Political Parties in an election/by-election year are also entitled, where eligible, to reimbursement of a portion of lawfully incurred election expenses.

On March 31, 2009, seven political parties were registered in the Province. Their names, abbreviations, leaders and chief official agents, as recorded on the Register of Political Parties, are set out in the following table:

Registered Political Parties
(As at March 31, 2009)

Political Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Leader	Chief Official Agent
Green Party of Saskatchewan	Green Party	Amber Jones	Penny Swartz
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Lorne Calvert	Debra McDonald
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	P.C. Party of Sask.	Rick Swenson	Luke Schmidt
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	Saskatchewan Liberal Party	Ryan Bater	Alan McIntyre
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	Saskatchewan Marijuana Party (SKMP)	Jason Hiltz	Tanya Derbowka
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	Wes Becker
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	Western Independence Party (W.I.P.)	John Nesdoly	Neil Fenske

In accordance with Section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the *Register of Political Parties* is available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. Potential Candidates

In accordance with Section 230 of *The Election Act, 1996*, any individual selected to be a candidate by a registered political party's constituency association, or being a person a party intends to endorse, must give written notice to that effect to the Office. Such notification must be filed in conjunction with the candidate's written appointment and consent of a business manager in accordance with Section 236, and written appointment and consent of an auditor in accordance with Section 238 of *The Election Act, 1996*. The Chief Electoral Office maintains a Register of Potential Candidates and information filed under Section 236 and 238 of *The Election Act, 1996* for public review.

As at March 31, 2009, there were no individuals registered on the *Register of Potential Candidates*.

3. Annual Financing Reporting

In accordance with Section 250 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the chief official agent of a registered political party shall annually file, prior to May 1st an audited fiscal period return in prescribed form detailing that party's financial activities. This annual financial reporting is undertaken on a *Registered Political Party's Fiscal Period Return* (Form E-521). Form E-521 reporting excludes expenses incurred during an election campaign period - such expenses are reported pursuant to Section 251 of *The Election Act, 1996*.

Form E-521 requires that individual donations of money and commercial value exceeding $250 received in a year from an individual, corporation, trade union, unincorporated organization or association or any other person or group of persons be reported. To deter contributions from third party agents, registered political parties must enclose with their Form E-521, copies, certified by the party's chief official agent, of every statement or document a party received pursuant to subsections 240(6) and (7) of *The Election Act, 1996*. An auditor's report filed in accordance with 237 of *The Election Act, 1996* must also accompany a registered political party's Form E-521.

Depicted in the following tables is a summary of registered political party contributions received, and expenses incurred, for the fiscal year 2008.

Fiscal Year 2008

Registered Political Party	Total Contributions	Contributions Cash on Hand	Expenses Operating Expenses	Expenses Advertising	Expenses Other	Expenses Total
Green Party of Saskatchewan	$ 6,477.52	$ 2,223.90	$ 8,471.21	-	$ 950.00	$ 9,421.21
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	941,494.55	628,985.67	1,165,889.48	-	154,003.60	1,319,893.08
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	9,008.50	5,006.11	11,536.20	-	-	11,536.20
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	156,381.45	51,242.00	132,513.00	-	7,900.00	140,413.00
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	3,895.71	300.94	4,266.49	2,750.00	-	7,016.49
Saskatchewan Party	1,476,933.00	1,169,735.00	1,249,335.00	76,093.00	226,370.00	1,551,798.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	135.00	405.30	1,776.19	-	-	1,776.19

Note: The information provided for 2008 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required changes will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Fiscal Year 2007 (as adjusted) Registered Political Party	Total Contributions	Contributions Cash on Hand	Expenses Operating Expenses	Expenses Advertising	Expenses Other	Expenses Total
*Green Party of Saskatchewan	28,487.83	1,100.79	8,096.19	217.30	5,912.00	14,225.49
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	2,291,297.45	468,940.56	1,634,509.84	134,357.10	299,208.75	2,068,075.69
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	13,875.09	6,939.66	13,802.47	-	3,775.00	17,577.47
**Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	654,673.00	14,588.00	239,030.00	1,823.00	333,947.00	574,800.00
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	9,793.84	14.56	9,857.55	1,440.88	-	11,298.43
Saskatchewan Party	4,794,646.00	688,349.00	2,683,931.00	214,922.00	1,498,845.00	4,397,698.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	5,279.31	2,049.27	5,261.13	-	-	5,261.13

*At the printing of the 2007 - 2008 Annual Report the Green Party's return for the fiscal year 2007 had not been finalized. The return has since been finalized and the numbers shown in the adjusted table have been updated.

**On August 24, 2007 the name for the Saskatchewan Heritage Party was changed to the Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party. On October 22, 2007 the party lender voluntarily requested the Chief Electoral Officer to deregister the Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party.

Pursuant to Section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, Registered Political Party Form E-521 returns are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan. Year 2008 returns may be viewed on the Elections Saskatchewan website.

C. Saskatchewan Political Contributions Tax Credit System

1. Introduction

The political contributions tax credit system provides provincial resident taxpayers, inclusive of individuals and corporations, the opportunity to claim tax credits based on eligible contributions made to a registered political party or independent candidate for which a valid tax receipt is obtained. *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* governs the Province's political contributions tax credit system and provides the basis for calculating political contribution tax credits for use by provincial resident taxpayers under *The Income Tax Act, 2000* (Saskatchewan) (the "Provincial Tax Act").

Tax receipts issued by registered political parties or independent candidates must conform to policies underlying the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* to qualify under the *Provincial Tax Act*. The Chief Electoral Officer has interpreted these policies to include the election of Members to the Legislative Assembly and necessarily related activities. Specifically, registered political parties and independent candidates may receipt contributions from provincial resident taxpayers, in accordance with the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, when those contributions are used to advance the democratic process in Saskatchewan.

2. Tax Receipts

Official income tax receipts are issued under Section 8 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* by a chief official agent on behalf of a registered political party or by a business manager in the case of an independent candidate. Only chief official agents whose names are recorded in the *Register of Political Parties* maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer can issue tax receipts. The business manager of an independent candidate is eligible to issue tax receipts if the constituency returning officer in accordance with Subsection 48(2) of *The Election Act, 1996* certifies the candidate's nomination.

- Tax receipts may be issued for eligible contributions of $25.00 or more received by a registered political party or independent candidate.

Effective with the 2004 taxation year, the tax credit available to provincial resident taxpayers is calculated in accordance with the following formula:

- Where the total eligible contribution is $400 or less, the amount of the tax credit that a taxpayer is entitled to claim for a taxation year is 75 percent of the total contribution, or
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than $400 but not greater than $750, the tax credit is $300 plus 50 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds $400; and
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than $750, the tax credit a taxpayer is entitled to claim is lesser of:
  - $475 plus 33 ⅓ percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds $750; or
  - $650.

3. Annual/Campaign Period Reporting

In accordance with Section 13 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, a chief official agent of a participating Registered Political Party must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used for the preceding calendar year. This reconciliation is filed with the Chief Electoral Officer in prescribed form on or by the last day of April. This annual reporting is undertaken on an *Annual Report of Contributions (Registered Political Party)* (Form P-602) and details the aggregate amount of contributions receipted, the number of tax receipts issued, spoiled or duplicated, and the number of tax receipts retained (i.e., unused).

Where an independent candidate participates in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, that candidate's business manager must file, in prescribed form, a reconciliation of tax receipts provided for use during the campaign period, together with the aggregate amount of contributions receipted, in accordance with Section 12 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Independent candidates campaign period reporting is submitted on a *Campaign Period Report of Contributions (Independent Candidate)* (Form P-606).

The aggregate value of political contribution tax credit receipts for 2002 was $2,010,183.89, for 2003 was $4,253,132.34, for 2004 was $1,811,834.88, for 2005 was $2,070,248.98, for 2006 was 2,383,382.00, for 2007 was $6,148,827.10 and for 2008 was $2,158,018.64. $11,110 was receipted and reported for independent candidates for 2003. Registered political parties, which issued tax receipts, and the aggregate value of those receipts for 2001-2008 are set out in the following tables.

Political Contributions Receipted

(Calendar Year 2002-2008)

Registered Political Party	Aggregate Receipted Contributions						
	2002	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008***
Green Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	$ 8,231.61	$ 6,206.00	$ 22,202.82	$4,810.00
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	1,003,187.32	1,239,870.72	855,799.18	1,016,582.49	1,014,666.63	1,513,128.14	692,250.19
New Green Alliance	8,883.16	17,081.30	13,373.00	-	-	-	7,870.00
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	-	4,540.00	11,850.00	-
Saskatchewan Heritage Party/ Saskatchewan Democratic Action Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	65,132.00	261,013.39	122,556.38	166,084.88	242,512.71	565,462.37	134,499.49
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	-	-	-	-	1,876.21	5,235.00	3,102.00
Saskatchewan Party	932,981.41	2,705,533.69	816,063.40	877,500.00	$1,106,037.45	4,025,889.26	1,315,381.96
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	-	18,523.24	4,042.92	1,850.00	7,543.00	5,059.51	105.00
Independent	-	11,110.00	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$2,010,183.89**	**$4,253,132.34**	**$1,811,834.88**	**$ 2,070,248.98**	**$2,383,382.00**	***$ 6,148,827.10***	***$ 2,158,018.64***

*Note: The information provided for 2008 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required changes will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Saskatchewan Tax Credits Claimed
For Political Contributions (2001-2008)

Tax Year	Total
2001	$1,663,123.32
2002	$2,010,183.89
2003	$4,253,132.34
2004	$1,811,834.88
2005	$2,070,248.98
2006	$2,383,382.00
2007	$6,148,827.10
2008	$2,158,018.64
Total Tax Credits Issued	**$22,498,751.15**

Pursuant to subsection 16(2) of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* and Section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, annual registered political party and independent candidate campaign filings, on Form P-602 and P-606, respectively, are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

D. Annual Reporting, Statutory Compliance and Public Disclosure

1. Annual Reporting

In past years the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer prepared a report entitled the *Detail of Expenditures* which refers to non-election, election and by-election expenditures, as the case may be, for each fiscal year. The Office then referred the *Detail of Expenditures* to the Minister of Finance who was responsible for arranging the tabling of the document and the distribution of the Report to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The past practice described above was based on a meeting, April 1, 1949, of the then Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing (the "Select Standing Committee") reported to the Legislative Assembly that they unanimously agreed:
... election expenses be shown (in Public Accounts) not only in total for each electoral division but that there be made available to each Member a detailed listing of the expenditures for his particular electoral division; these listings to be ... available to opposition and government alike.

Due to the timing of the Martensville By-Election, constituency expenditures could not be finalized until the end of September 2007. Before the 2006-2007 *Detail of Expenditures* could be prepared, the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election was called. Due to the timing of the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election and the Cumberland By-Election constituency expenditures could not be finalized until the end of March, 2009.

The *Detail of Expenditures* for the Fiscal year 2006-2007 was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 31, 2009 and was distributed to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. It was at this time that the Office was made aware that the past practice of the Minister of Finance tabling the *Detail of Expenditures* was no longer in force in legislation.

While there is no legislative requirement to do so, and there is no compelling reason not to do so, however, the Office believes that there is a moral obligation for the Office to continue the past practice. The Office will therefore continue to produce a *Detail of Expenditures* for each fiscal year and to request that the document be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The *Detail of Expenditures* reports for both fiscal years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 will be tabled prior to the end of August 2009.

Statutory reporting is the means by which the Legislative Assembly has directed the Office to report on activities managed by the Chief Electoral Officer. Such reporting, in addition to outlining the conduct of each electoral event and financial practices related therefore to, provides an annual update of Office activities for consideration by the Legislative Assembly and members of the public. The Office, pursuant to Sections 7 and 286 of *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*, prepared and tabled the following reports in the Legislative Assembly from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

Elections Saskatchewan - Tabled Reports
(April 1, 2008 - March 31, 2009)

Report Tabled	Date Tabled
Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan (2007-2008)	January 30, 2009
Detail of Expenditures, The Election Act, 1996, Provincial Constituencies Fiscal Year 2006-2007	March 31, 2009

To comply with Sections 174, 221, 233 and 262 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office also published the following notices in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, as set out in the following table.

Elections Saskatchewan Published Notices - The Saskatchewan Gazette
(April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009)

Date Gazetted	Volume/Number	Gazetted Item
July 25, 2008	Vol. 104 No. 30	Notice given of Doyle Vermette election as the member of the Legislative Assembly for the Constituency of Cumberland.
February 13, 2009	Vol.105 No. 7	Province of Saskatchewan Expense Limits for the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2009.
February 13, 2009	Vol. 105 No. 7	Summary of financial contributions received and expenses incurred by candidates for the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election.

In support of the heightened transparency objective of *The Election Act, 1996*, the foregoing reports, documents and notices are available for public review at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. Statutory Compliance Assistance

The Election Act, 1996 places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to discharge administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, to compile requisite support documentation, and to disclose annual and electoral financial details in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. To this end, the Office previously published the following guidance documentation, pursuant to section 5 and Part VII (Registration and Election Financing) of *The Election Act, 1996:* i) Registered Political Party's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-508); ii) Chief Official Agent's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-520); iii) Auditor's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-528); iv) Candidate's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-400); v) Business Manager's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-402); and vi) Auditor's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-404).

Forms E-400, E-402 and E-404 were updated in the 2005-2006 fiscal year with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. In the fall of 2006 Form E-508, E-520 and E-528 were updated with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. The above guides as well as the Form E-412 Candidate Returns and the Form E-524 Registered Political Party Return and all the associated attachments are also available on CD.

Further, to outline the statutory obligations under the system governing registered political parties' and independent candidates' acceptance of eligible contributions and the issuance of official tax receipts, the Office also previously prepared and disseminated the *Guide to Provisions of The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Registered Political Party)* (Form E-600) and the *Guide to Provisions of the Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Independent Candidate)* (Form E-604).

3. Public Disclosure/Public Relations

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Chief Electoral Officer will supply any person who so requests copies of, or extracts from, registers or any report, return or document pertaining to a registered political party or candidate, which are statutorily filed with the Office. It should be noted that such reports, returns and documents may not be complete or may contain errors/omissions, as the Office's review and verification of such documentation may not have been completed at time of initial public inspection. Following Office review and verification, all finalized reports, returns and documents remain available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

The Office also maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires, and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

E. Operational Expenditures - Elections Saskatchewan

The Office annually presents budgetary expenditure estimates by function - administration, constituency returning office maintenance and annual electoral related activities - to the Board of Internal Economy. Actual annual administration and constituency level financial results for fiscal year 2008-2009 are set out in summary form in the following table.

Operational expenditures -Elections Saskatchewan
Fiscal Year 2008-2009

Expenditure Code	Administration	Constituencies (58)
Personal Services	393,116.00	43,392.00
Contractual Services	339,952.00	-
Advertising	14,512.00	-
Travel and Business	21,835.00	-
Supplies and Services	9,511.00	-
Assets Expensed	42,381.00	-
Total	821,307.00	45,392.00

Refer to the Appendix for current year financial statement and notes.

VII. Cumberland By-Election

Pursuant to Section 40 of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2007*, Ms. Joan Beatty, New Democratic Party, Sask. Section, vacated her seat in the constituency of Cumberland on January 3, 2008. On May 27, 2008, pursuant to an Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, a Writ of Election was issued by the Chief Electoral Officer to Ms. Marlene Wolkosky, Constituency Returning Officer. The Writ ordered that the By-Election be held on Wednesday, June 25, 2008.

Prior to the June 25, 2008 By-Election, standings in the Legislative Assembly included: 38 Saskatchewan Party Members, 19 New Democrat Members and 1 vacant seat.

At close of nomination, three of the Province's Registered Political Parties nominated candidates, as follows:

Candidate	Registered Political Party	Abbreviation
Dale McAuley	Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party
Tory McGregor	Green Party of Saskatchewan	Green Party
Doyle Vermette	New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)

Unofficial electoral results were announced on the evening of June 25, 2008, resulting in Mr. Doyle Vermette, New Democratic Party, being declared Member-elect. One of the other candidates forfeited their deposits, pursuant to section 47 of the Act, for not obtaining at least one half of the total number of valid votes cast for the candidate elected.

On July 7, 2008, the constituency Returning Officer tabulated the results of votes cast by way of absentee ballot. These figures were then reflected in the constituency results concluding the final count. Upon completion of the final count, on July 18, 2008, the constituency Returning Officer made a Return to the Writ of Election. The Office published in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* (Volume 104 No. 30) notice of receipt of the Return to the Writ and the name of the candidate elected.

Eligible Voters	Dale McAuley	Tory McGregor	Doyle Vermette	Total Counted	Rejected
8,439	1,402	182	1,570	3,154	22

The Report for the June 25, 2008 Cumberland By-Election will be tabled later this year.

VIII. Financial Administration of Provincial General Elections

The Chief Electoral Officer is charged with administering the Province's electoral statute, and with assessing and, where applicable, reimbursing eligible election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review and audit to certify public reimbursement of election expenses by reviewing financial practices, documents and disclosure of Registered Political Parties and candidates. The expenses and income of Registered Political Parties and candidates are reported, the returns are audited and Elections Saskatchewan Expenses are noted. There were no Provincial General Elections to report on in this fiscal year.

The Office administered one Provincial By-Election which will be the subject of a distinct report to be the tabled in the Legislative Assembly later this year.

IX. Liaison

To improve the electoral process in Saskatchewan, the Office:

- maintains a liaison with various stakeholder groups in the province in order to receive feedback on election legislation, policies and procedures;
- educates stakeholder groups about the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer;
- reviews and assesses new electoral administration initiatives on an on-going basis; and
- maintains a liaison with all independent officers of the Legislative Assembly.

In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, Office representatives participated in stakeholder meetings as part of the post-election debriefing process, in federal, provincial, territorial electoral meetings, and conferences, along with meetings of the independent officers as summarized below in chronological order:

A. Saskatchewan Social Science Teachers' Institute

The Chief Electoral Officer gave a presentation to the Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on the role of the Office Chief Electoral Officer/Elections Saskatchewan on **April 6, 2008.**

B. Public Forum on Voting and Ways to Improve Accessibility to Voters with Disabilities

The Office organized two "Public Forums on Voting and Ways to Improve Accessibility to Voters with Disabilities" held in Regina on **April 9, 2008** and in Saskatoon on **April 10, 2008.** The Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer met with representatives from disability organizations and individual voters with disabilities. The Office outlined the current accommodations available for voters with disabilities. Many interesting suggestions for possible changes to legislation, policies, procedures and materials were discussed. These discussions were taken into account as the Office prepared the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer -Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election November 7, 2007. In the 2009-2010 fiscal year possible changes to policies, procedures and materials will be reviewed.

C. Registered Political Party Advisory Committee

The ad-hoc registered political advisory committee was formed in 2001 to afford registered political party representatives the opportunity to advise on the administration of the act and tax credit act, with particular emphasis on the future needs of Saskatchewan's electorate and political stakeholders.

On **May 8, 2008** a meeting of the Registered Political Party Advisory Committee was held to debrief on the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election. Topics included the Debriefing with Stakeholders: Returning Officers/Suppliers/Town Halls with Voters with Disabilities; Legislative Changes such as:

- Nomination Process;
- Appointment of Candidate's Representatives at a Central Polling Place;
- Absentee Voting;
- Policies on Acceptable Identification and Vouching;
- Appointment of Returning Officers by Chief Electoral Officer; and
- Election Finances.

As well as new initiatives:

- Elections Saskatchewan Permanent Registry of Eligible Electors (ESPREE);
- Voter Identification Cards;
- Mobile Polls for Personal Care Homes;
- Magnifiers/New Improved Template for Visually Impaired/Blind Voters; and
- New Communications Initiatives:
  - Advertising Radio & Revised Newspaper Ads;
  - Brochures;
  - Community Relations Officers (Aboriginal & Youth);
  - Contact Centre; and
  - Updated website.
- Training:
  - Increased Training for Returning Officers and Election Clerks; and
  - Manual for Deputy Returning Officers and Poll Clerks.

Other topics regarding the 2007 General Election, the pending Cumberland By-Election and initial preparations and The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer -Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election November 7, 2007 were discussed.

D. New Brunswick Municipal Election Visitor's Program

The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office at the Visitor's Program for the New Brunswick Municipal Election **May 11 – 13, 2008.** Changes in the municipal legislation, central tabulation machines, computerized check off systems, results reporting, audio voting options, new training videos and training strategies were outlined. Of particular interest to Saskatchewan was the audio voting option used for voters with disabilities and training videos.

E. Conference of Canadian Election Officials

Federal, provincial and territorial Chief Electoral Officers and senior staff have met annually since 1975 at the Conference of Canadian Election Officials to discuss all facets of electoral administration. Elections Québec hosted the 2008 Conference of Canadian Election Officials in Québec City from **August 12 – 15, 2008**. The Chief Electoral Officer and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the Conference on behalf of Elections Saskatchewan. Deliberations focused on fixed date elections, proposed electoral reforms, the transformation of the Electoral Technology Accord into a Technology Committee, on-line transactional services, common service agreements, election planning framework, evolution of the business model in information technologies, evaluation of elections, electoral participation and the delimitation of territory for election purposes (boundaries commissions).

F. Meetings With Other Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly

The Independent Officers in Saskatchewan get together most months on the third Wednesday of the month for a luncheon meeting. On **August 27, 2008** the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended on behalf of the Office a special meeting of the independent officers to discuss shared Information Technology/Information Services and to discuss the clarification of executive government processes and the legislative branch of government.

G. Consultations with Elections Canada - National Register of Electors Advisory Committee (NROE)

Elections Canada's National Register of Electors Advisory Committee was formed in 1999 to discuss the further development of maintenance of the national permanent voters' registry. The Committee was to provide an ongoing forum for: (i) sharing information to improve the maintenance and use of electronic electoral databases; and (ii) discussing Elections Canada's initiatives for sharing the national registry with provincial and territorial jurisdictions. On behalf of Elections Saskatchewan, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer participated in a Committee meeting on **November 20 and 21, 2008** in Ottawa. The topics for discussion included a review of the revised terms of reference of the committee, post federal election analysis, data quality confirmation studies, simplifying voting – the New Brunswick experience, targeted revision, recruitment and training and collaborative opportunities. As a result of the discussions the group decided on the top four topics to be discussed at the Canadian Election Officials Conference in July 2009 and decided to change the name of the committee to the "Advisory Committee of Electoral Partners".

H. International United Nations Day for Persons with Disabilities

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer was invited to attend the International United Nations Day for Persons with Disabilities held on **December 3, 2008** and organized by the South Saskatchewan Independent Living Center. A booth was set up by the Office with information about accommodations for voting for persons with disabilities. Voting templates and magnifiers were available for distribution.

I. Council On Government Ethics Laws (COGEL)

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer attended the COGEL Conference in Chicago, Illinois from **December 7-10, 2008.** Sessions attended included voter participation, the increasing role of the internet, cascade training, electronic filing, international elections, campaign finance, current trends in election legislation and litigation, effective audit techniques, lawyers and elections and early voting and voting technologies.

J. Elections Canada - Debriefing with Saskatchewan and Manitoba Federal Returning Officers

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer was invited to attend the Post–Election Debriefing for Saskatchewan and Manitoba Federal Returning Officers held in Winnipeg, **December 11-12 2008**. Successes and challenges at the constituency level for the October 2008 federal election were discussed.

K. Technology Committee

A document to explain the move from the former format of Electoral Technology Accord to a Technology Committee of the Conference Canadian Election Officials was tabled and discussed at the Canadian Election Officials Conference in August 2008. A conference call was held on **January 8, 2009** and some initial work was done by the committee, but has been on hold because the sponsoring member and facilitator of the Committee were busy with the May 2009 British Columbia General Election. At the time of writing the committee has been given an extension on its initial year's work until November 2009.

L. Presentation to Legislative Interns

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer gave a presentation to the Legislative Interns on the role of the Office Chief Electoral Officer/Elections Saskatchewan on **January 13, 2009.**

M. Canadian Election Officials' Inter-jurisdictional Workshop

In the mid 1980's senior Canadian election officials set up a workshop format where various electoral topics are discussed at the operational level. The workshop has been held most years in the middle of February.

The Acting Chief Electoral Officer and the Manager of Election Finances represented the Office at the 2009 Inter-jurisdictional Workshop on Election Finances. Elections Manitoba hosted this workshop in Winnipeg from **February 18-20, 2009**. Topics of discussion and learning included an update of finance legislation across the country, review of election returns, advertising, independent candidates, trends in public funding, relations between set election dates and spending limits, techniques to obtain compliance, confidentiality vs. disclosure in investigations, contributions - real time reporting, transition in contribution limits, impact of internet/blogging on elections, third party advertising, recommendations to strengthen campaign finance legislation, relationships with political entities and the role of the external auditor.

N. Ongoing Liaison with Other Jurisdictions

Throughout the reporting period, the Office has received valuable assistance from all Canadian federal, provincial and territorial electoral jurisdictions. The Office thanks all other election Offices across the country for their valuable assistance while we have continued to research best practices in other jurisdictions, particularly with the research and drafting of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election, November 7, 2007.

On-going liaison is greatly assisted through the use of the Canadian Election Resource Library (CERL). This on-line extranet resource is based at the offices of Elections Manitoba and was launched in the spring of 2004. A nominal annual subscription fee from the electoral offices across the country subsidizes the coordinator's salary and benefits. CERL members may interact with other CERL members by replying to messages or starting their own message thread. CERL members may also view on-line forms, legislation, manuals/guides, policies and reports from other jurisdictions across the country.

X. Miscellaneous Activities

A. Human Rights Complaints

- **On April 23, 2008**, a complaint was received regarding the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election. The complaint came as a result of concerns raised by an individual from Saskatoon. The individual, a wheelchair user, alleges that he was discriminated against with respect to facilities to which the public is customarily admitted because of his disability.
- The initial legal process regarding this complaint was completed between April and August 2008.
- In January 2009, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer and legal counsel met with two representatives of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to discuss settling the complaint. After more negotiations, in March 2009, a fully executed settlement agreement between the parties was received from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. The settlement included the following:
  - the respondents agree to make a concerted effort to find an alternative location for the school in question;
  - the Chief Electoral Officer agrees to advocate for legislative changes including the provision for "transfer certificates" allowing wheelchair users to apply to transfer their vote to a location accessible for wheelchairs if their assigned polling place is not accessible;
  - the Chief Electoral Officer agrees to conduct an accessibility audit of all polling locations in the Province prior to the next Provincial General Election and to use the Chief Electoral Officer's best efforts to ensure, to the extent practicable, that polling locations are accessible for wheelchairs;
  - the Chief Electoral Officer agrees to stress in the training of all Returning Officers that all polling places should, wherever practicable, be in a location accessible for wheelchairs and that a thorough search for the best locations is expected. In instances, where an accessible location is determined by a Returning Officer not to be available, the Chief Electoral Officer will so be informed so that alternatives can be further explored; and
  - the Chief Electoral Officer agrees to review, prior to the next general election, how disabled voters might best be informed of options available for voting. This may include indicating on the voter information card whether a voter's polling location is wheelchair accessible or not, and asking voters to identify the need for assistance in casting their vote.
- **On October 21, 2008,** a complaint was received regarding the November 7, 2007 Provincial General Election. The complaint came as a result of concerns raised by an individual from Saskatoon. The individual believes that alternate means of voting should be implemented which would allow blind voters to cast and verify their votes independently. Both the Government of Saskatchewan and the Chief Electoral Officer for Saskatchewan are named in the complaint.
- This is the same individual who complained to the Human Rights Commission following the November 5, 2003 Provincial General Election. The 2004 complaint came as a result of the concerns raised by the individual from Saskatoon. The individual felt aggrieved and humiliated by the treatment the Province's elections legislation affords a blind voter. Over several years numerous meetings, including conciliation took place, to work out a solution, to this situation, however, no compromise was reached. As a result this matter was referred to a Tribunal.

- The hearing was held on November 21-22, 2006 in Saskatoon. The complainant requested that Braille candidate information be available at all of the approximate 3000 polls across the Province and that he receive some compensation for his humiliation at having to use a template at the poll. During the conciliation stage the logistical problems of producing Braille documents and distributing them across the Province were identified (not to mention the high cost of doing so). The Chief Electoral Officer had offered instead to institute a process similar to that set up for Absentee Voters whereby an individual could apply for Braille information to be made available at his or her poll. This offer was rejected. The Office received the decision of the Tribunal shortly after the November 2007 general election. The Tribunal determined that the Office had made sufficient accommodations for blind or visually impaired voters.
- On November 12, 2008, the legal counsel for the Office replied to the 2008 complaint.
- At time of writing this report there has been no response to the November 12, 2008 letter.

B. Staffing

- Jean Ouellet resigned as Chief Electoral Officer effective October 22, 2008. David Wilkie was appointed Acting Chief Electoral Officer effective November 1, 2008. At the time of writing this report the position of Chief Electoral Officer has been advertised with an application closing date of July 15, 2009.
- The position of Manager of Information Technology and Register of Electors was filled in September 2008. The position, which became vacant in November 2006, had remained vacant due to the timing of the provincial general election. For the previous twenty-one months the Office had had an agreement with the Communications and Technology Services Branch of the Legislative Assembly Office for basic IT services.
- In the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget process the position of Manager of Election Operations and Communications was divided into two more junior positions (Elections Operations Officer and Communications/Community Relations Officer). The Chief Electoral Officer chose not to recruit for these two vacant positions. Upon assuming the role of Acting Chief Electoral Officer, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer was asked by the Board of Internal Economy not to recruit for the two vacant positions pending an organizational review of the Office. During the reporting period the Communications/Community Relations function has been temporarily carried out by the Acting Chief Electoral Officer/Assistant Chief Electoral Officer. Some of the duties of the Election Operations Officer position have been done on a contract basis with the remainder of the duties assumed by the Acting Chief Electoral Officer.
- From time to time the staff of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer was complemented with temporary contractor resources, particularly with respect to the post general election finances audit and review processes.
- At the time of writing this report, the Office has successfully completed the recruitment of three, six-month contract positions in the area of communications, finance and administration. The overall, long-term staffing of the Office is pending awaiting the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer and a discussion of the Organization Review of the Office of the Chief Electoral Office by David Hamilton. See Short-term Initiatives #7 for more details.

C. Continuing Education

The Office is committed to:

- **being innovative, creative and flexible** in delivering the present and preparing for the future looking broadly for opportunities and partnerships while considering electoral process needs and adopting optimal solutions; and

- **having a cooperative working environment** and encourage all members of the election team to **work together** and to work with their stakeholders and partners to better serve the electorate of Saskatchewan.

In order to achieve these goals the Office is committed to continuing education. In this reporting period, the staff in the Office have taken advantage of the following continuing education opportunities:

The Acting Administrative Coordinator:

- Attended Word 2002-2003 Level 2 course - Regina, May 21, 2008;
- Attended Word 2003 Level 3 course - Regina, May 29, 2008; and
- Attended Advanced Excel course - Regina, June 19, 2008.

The Manager of Election Finances:

- Attended "Professional Development Day" offered by the Financial Management Institute, Regina, September 24, 2008;
- Fact finding visit to Elections Manitoba to learn more about Election Manitoba's campaign finance systems and processes (both paper & electronic), filing disk for candidate election returns and payroll program and applications, Winnipeg, November 21-22 2008;
- Fact finding visit to Elections Alberta to learn more about Election Alberta's reporting requirements of political entities, political entity reporting process, public entity registration module, and payment process software, Edmonton, December 1-2, 2008;
- Participated in Inter-jurisdictional Finance Workshop in Winnipeg, February 18-20, 2009; and
- Attended a half-day "Financial Management Training" offered by the Comptroller's Office, Regina, February 26, 2009.

The Manager of Information Technology and Register of Electors:

- Attended a Modern Risk Management Conference – Regina, November 18 -19, 2008;
- Fact finding visit to Elections Manitoba to learn more about Election Manitoba's campaign finance software, filing disk for candidate election returns and payroll program and applications, Winnipeg, November 21-22 2008; and
- Fact finding visit to Elections Alberta to learn more about Election Alberta's public entity registration module, AROES Calendar, Voter Link demonstration and payment process software, Edmonton, December 1-2, 2008.

Acting Chief Electoral Officer/Assistant Chief Electoral Officer:

- Attended Visitor's Program for New Brunswick Municipal Election, Fredericton, May 11–13, 2008;
- Attended Lecture by Kevin Fenwick on "Administrative Justice Tribunals", Regina, May 22, 2008;
- Participated in annual Conference of Canadian Election Officials, Québec City, August 12-15, 2008;
- Participated in annual Council On Government Ethics Laws (COGEL) conference, Chicago, December 7-10, 2008;
- Participated in Inter-jurisdictional Finance Workshop in Winnipeg, February 18-20, 2009; and
- Attended a half-day "Financial Management Training" offered by the Comptroller's Office, Regina, February 26, 2009.

See Section IX. Liaison for more information about the conferences and workshops mentioned above.

D. Other

- The Office received a United Way of Regina Certificate of Community Spirit in recognition of the Office's outstanding support to the 2008 Circle of Care Campaign.
- In the past the Office did not follow any formal records retention policy. In February and March 2008 the Office entered in formal discussions with Saskatchewan Archives to bring the Office on-side with independent offices with regards to records retention. As time permits, this process will continue in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

XI. Recommendations – Amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*

Major changes were made to *The Election Act, 1996*, which were proclaimed on March 22, 2006. *The Annual Report Compendium 2003-2005* and the *Annual Reports of 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008* with the advent of the regularization of the Annual Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on a fiscal year basis, brought the opportunity for the Chief Electoral Officer to make Recommendations on Amendments to *The Election Act* on a regular basis.

For the first time following a Provincial General Election, new recommendations for Amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, along with a review and update of any "old" recommendations from Annual Reports not yet addressed, were included in the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer - Volume III - Recommendations for Changes to *The Election Act, 1996* - Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election (Volume III) which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 30, 2009.

Since the drafting of (Volume III) there is one additional matter which should be reviewed when possible changes to *The Election Act, 1996* are considered by the Legislative Assembly in 2009-2010.

ANNUAL REPORTING [Subsection 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996* and Section 4 of *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*]

Background:

In past years the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer prepared a report entitled the *Detail of Expenditures* which refers to non-election, election and by-election expenditures in constituencies, as the case may be, for each fiscal year. The Office then referred the *Detail of Expenditures* to the Minister of Finance who was responsible for arranging for the tabling of the document and for the distribution of the Report to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The past practice described above was based on a meeting, April 1, 1949, of the then Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing (the "Select Standing Committee") reported to the Legislative Assembly that they unanimously agreed:

> ... election expenses be shown (in Public Accounts) not only in total for each electoral division but that there be made available to each Member a detailed listing of the expenditures for his particular electoral division; these listings to be ... available to opposition and government alike.

Due to the timing of the Martensville By-Election, constituency expenditures could not be finalized until the end of September 2007. Before the 2006-2007 *Detail of Expenditures* could be prepared, the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election was called. Due to the timing of the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election and the Cumberland By-Election constituency expenditures could not be finalized until March 2009.

The *Detail of Expenditures* for the Fiscal year 2006-2007 was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 31, 2009 and was distributed to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. It was at this time that the Office was made aware that the past practice of the Minister of Finance tabling the *Detail of Expenditures* was no longer in force in legislation.

While there is no legislative requirement to do so, and there is no compelling reason not to do so, the Office believes that there is a moral obligation for the Office to continue the past practice. The Office will therefore continue to produce a *Detail of Expenditures* for each fiscal year and to request that the document be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The *Detail of Expenditures* reports for both fiscal years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 will be tabled prior to the end of August 2009.

The legislation should be changed in order to formalize the now informal practice of having the Speaker lay the Detail of Expenditures before the Legislative Assembly.

The "Detail of Expenditures" should be laid before the Legislative Assembly within 120 days after the period in accordance with Section 4 of *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*. The only exception should be in the year which includes a Provincial General Election. In accordance with Subsection 261(1) of *The Election Act, 1996* the business managers of candidates have **three months after polling day** to submit candidate election expenses returns and in accordance with Subsection 251(1) of *The Election Act, 1996* the chief official agents of registered political parties have **six months after polling day** to submit their political party's expense return. Subsection of 265(5)(b) of *The Election Act, 1996* currently states that the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is to pay interest on top of any reimbursement that the candidate may otherwise be eligible for if the amount of the reimbursement is not paid within **90 days** after the Chief Electoral Officer has received the return. The preparation of the Detail of Expenditures for the year in which a Provincial General Election occurs is a massive project. In order to allow for all bills to be paid to election officials, suppliers and reimbursement to be paid to eligible candidates and registered political parties the "Detail of Expenditures" should be laid before the Legislative Assembly within **240 days** after the period.

Recommendation:
That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended so that the annual "Detail of Expenditures" be laid before the Assembly by the Speaker "within 120 days after the period" for all years with the exception of years in which a Provincial General Election occurs which would be "within **240 days** after the period".

2008-2009 Financial Statement and Notes

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2008	2007
Financial Assets		
Due from the General Revenue Fund	$ 110,374	$ 1,321,926
Accounts Receivable	83	330,537
	110,457	1,652,463
Liabilities		
Accounts payable (General Election Payable)	82,737	1,617,387
Accrued vacation pay	27,720	35,076
	110,457	1,652,463
Net Debt	0	0
Non-financial Assets:		
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 3)	37,855	25,446
Prepaid expenses	-	-
	37,855	25,446
Accumulated Surplus	$ 37,855	$ 25,446

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICE
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2008		2007
Revenue:	**Budget (Note 4)**	**Actual (Note 5)**	**Actual**
General Revenue Fund:	$ 1,071,000	$ 866,699	$ 730,970
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-
Total Revenue	1,071,000	866,699	$ 730,970
Expenses:			
Personal Services	702,576	438,508	431,653
Contractual Services	218,925	339,952	237,137
Advertising	33,141	14,512	7,639
Travel and Business	79,698	21,835	21,336
Supplies and Services	18,826	9,511	9,196
Amortization	-	29,972	15,555
Total Expense	$ 1,053,166	$ 854,290	$ 722,516
Surplus/Deficit	$ 17,834	$ 12,409	$ 8,454
Accumulated Surplus beginning of year		25,446	16,992
Accumulated Surplus End of Year		$ 37,855	$ 25,446

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2008	2007
Annual Surplus	$ 12,409	$ 8,454
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(42,381)	(24,009)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	$ 29,972	$ 15,555
	(12,409)	(8,454)
Use of a prepaid expense	-	-
	-	-
(Increase) in Net Debt	-	-
Net debt, beginning of year		
Net debt, end of year	-	-

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2008 (Note 5)	2007
Operating:		
Cash received from:		
General Revenue Fund:	866,699	730,970
Miscellaneous Income	-	-
	$ 866,699	$ 730,970
Cash paid for:		
Personal Services	438,508	431,653
Contractual Services	339,952	237,137
Advertising	14,512	7,639
Travel and Business	21,835	21,336
Supplies and Services	9,511	9,196
Equipment	-	-
	$ 824,318	$ 706,961
Cash Provided by Operating Transactions	$ 42,381	$ 24,009
Capital Transactions:		
Cash to acquire tangible capital assets	42,381	24,009
Cash Applied to Tangible Capital Transactions	$ 42,381	$ 24,009
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	$ -	$ -

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2009

1. Authority and Purpose

The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislative Assembly and is appointed by resolution. The mandate of the Office is to administer provincial elections, enumerations other than during an election, and provincial election finances under *The Election Act, 1996*. The Office maintains the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure regime under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001* and administers referenda, plebiscites and time votes according to *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and *The Time Act*.

2. Summary of Accounting Policies

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer used Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in the preparation of these financial statements. Significant accounting policies are described below:

(a) **Basis of Accounting** – The financial statements are prepared using the expense basis of accounting.

(b) **Revenue** – The Office receives statutory appropriations from the General Revenue Fund to carry out required duties.

(c) **Tangible Capital Assets** – Tangible capital assets are reported at cost less accumulated amortization. All capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over three to five years.

(d) **Accrued Vacation Pay Liability** – Vacation entitlements earned but not taken are recorded as a liability.

3. Tangible Capital Assets

Cumulative Comparison

Category	Original Cost	Accumulated Amortization	2008 Net Book Value	Original Cost	Accumulated Amortization	2007 Net Book Value
Computer Equipment	112,603	86,478	26,125	79,684	61,802	17,882
Office Equipment	16,209	9,548	6,661	10,857	6,281	4,576
Furniture	17,163	12,094	5,068	13,053	10,065	2,988
Total	**$145,975**	**$108,120**	**$37,855**	**$ 103,594**	**$ 78,148**	**$ 25,446**

4. **Budget Figures** – These are amounts presented annually to the Board of Internal Economy for the Office to carry out duties under *The Election Act, 1996*.

5. **Total Expense Figures** – The figures presented only include normal non-election expenses. Additional costs from the 2007 Provincial General Election and the Cumberland By-Election in 2008 would bring total expenditures to $1,165,956 for the year.

6. **Costs Borne by Third Party Agencies** – During the year the Office received certain administrative services from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Assembly without charge. No provision for these costs has been made in these statements.